

Board games for for people with disabilities

Background

Board games are in the middle of something of a golden age – the range, sophistication and popularity of tabletop experiences has never been greater. Don't think Monopoly or Cluedo for this – board games are amazing now. However, along with this comes a range of accessibility problems for people with disabilities – these games are often challenging to play because of their strong emphasis on non-standard user interactions. Little attention has historically been given to this area, but this is changing as the topic gains more focus. This project would be aimed at addressing this.

Description

This project has an open scope – what I'm looking for is a group interested in creating digital tools to present accessibility information in a way that would be useful to one or more of the following stakeholders:

- People with disabilities
- Non-disabled gamers that want to find appropriate games for disabled friends
- Board game designers / publishers
- Academic researchers

The supervisor of this project has been putting together a large corpus of data on this topic, and has codified a number of design principles that are important to communicate. However, beyond a series of blog posts and a few recommender tools there is little in place that can be used to algorithmically query this data in a simple way.

Some possible forms this project might take:

- Automatic identification of accessibility issues new games
- Digital tools that work to compensate for specific or general accessibility problems
- Process existing discursive text and categorize it in a way suitable for case-based reasoning
- Creating of analysis tools that assess proposed designs for likely accessibility issues
- Provision of interrogable accessibility guidelines in a designer friendly format

These are only examples – the exact form this project takes will depend on student skills, interests, and availability of suitable users for testing. This is a highly user-focused discipline and the project will as a result have highly user-focused criteria for success.

Suggested reading material

This is very heavy on resources from the supervisor, because it's a niche topic that isn't well explored by others.

- Pretty much all of <http://meeplelikeus.co.uk>.
- <https://sightless.fun/>
- <https://www.abletablegaming.co.uk/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0005f1n>
- <https://monocle.com/radio/shows/monocle-on-design/extra-165/>
- <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40869-018-0056-9>
- <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40869-018-0057-8>
- <https://www.tabletopgaming.co.uk/board-games/articles/its-time-to-turn-grumbles-about-inaccessibility-in-board-games-into-a>

Target group

D, DV, IT and I

Special Prerequisites

The exact emphasis of the project will depend on student capabilities, but will involve some mix of software development, game design, user centred design, player psychology and qualitative research methods.

The author of this proposal does not yet speak Swedish, so all correspondence/submissions are required to be in English.

Proposal Author

Dr. Michael Heron, heronm@chalmers.se

Supervisor

Dr. Michael Heron, heronm@chalmers.se